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Northern Region News

A Newsletter for Employees and Retirees

ISSUE 10

October 1997

Reorganization, Downsizing:

RO Support Services Cuts Out Duplication; Is Flexible, Efficient

Support services have been restructured in the Northern Region headquarters. Personnel are now organized into two support groups to provide more efficient, coordinated and economical support services. The new administrative structure requires fewer people.

As directed by the Regional Board of Directors (BOD) in 1996, the coordinated support groups are structured to eliminate duplicated services by ending repetitious activities in every staff area in the RO.

This reorganization was designed and implemented through extensive analysis by RO Program Assistants and Office Services work groups, work by reinvention teams, and decisionmaking by the BOD. Objectives of the restructuring are to transition to a smaller RO organization over time (staffs as well as support); maximize efficiency and effectiveness of RO support operations, now and into the future; and promote added personal growth opportunities for the support staff personnel.

RO support services are now structured and combined into two groups, serving the areas under the Deputy Regional Foresters: State & Private Forestry/Operations; NFS Resources.

The State & Private Forestry/Operations Group provides services to seven RO staff groups. It is under the administrative direction of Group Leader Sandy Evenson:

- ★ Fire, Aviation & Air.
- ★ Cooperative Forestry & Forest Health.
- ★ Public & Governmental Relations.
- ★ Property & Procurement.
- ★ Information Systems.
- ★ Financial Resources.
- ★ Human Resources.

Contacts for administering required support services to the SPF/Operations group include: Kathy Solheim, Joyce Pritchard, Betty Blocker, Linda Hastie, Gayle McMurray, Sunni Baker, Jodi Lahti, and Matt Gordon.

The National Forest Systems (NFS) Resource Deputy area provides support services to five RO staff groups and is under the administrative direction of Group Leader Nancy Steward:

- ★ Engineering.

- ★ Ecosystem Assessment & Planning.
- ★ Forest & Rangeland.
- ★ Recreation, Minerals, Lands, Heritage & Wilderness.
- ★ Watershed, Wildlife, Fisheries & Rare Plants.

Contacts, for administering services to the NFS group include: Judy Ellington, Marty Kay, Jan Oliver, Lois Sandvick, Kathy Allen, Mary Esther Betson, Donna Boileau, Michelle Brown, Suzette Dailey, Brandi Henry, Amber Olsen, Shandra Rissman, Jackie Strain, Nancy Trotter, and Lindsey Turner.

Greater flexibility and adaptability has been built into this new administrative design for delivering RO support services. It permits personnel to adjust quickly in responding to fast-changing and sometimes abrupt developments and demands.

It provides support employees new opportunities for involvement in a greater range of Forest Service activities in the RO, coordinating their work and services with all RO staffs. This new organizational approach to RO support services has eliminated unnecessary duplication, is flexible and adaptable, requires fewer employees and is better able to respond to crisis needs and unexpected changes.

In the early months of this new operation, the support staff has demonstrated dedication and capability. Over time, the RO personnel served by the support groups will adapt and become accustomed to the changes in the way services are provided. Day by day and week by week, the support organization is demonstrating its capability in meeting workload challenges and skill in adapting to changing needs in the RO.

Cooke City Public Lands Withdrawn From Mineral Entry

More than 22,000 acres of public lands in the Custer and Gallatin National Forests in the Cooke City, Montana, area have been withdrawn from mineral entry for 20 years under the 1872 Mining Law.

Assistant Secretary of Interior for Lands and Minerals Bob Armstrong and U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment Jim Lyons signed the Record of Decision (ROD) and announced the decision August 12. The withdrawal area is in the Custer and Gallatin NFs, adjacent to the northeast corner of Yellowstone National Park.

The mineral withdrawal is a formal order that withholds Federal lands and minerals from various forms of mineral entry, except for oil and gas. It does not apply to private lands (4,160 acres), nor does it affect rights associated with valid, unpatented claims.

With implementation of the mineral withdrawal, amendments to the Custer and Gallatin NF Plans are necessary. Assistant Secretary Lyons also issued a decision in the ROD to amend the Forest Plans in accordance with the withdrawal.

In 1995, President Clinton declared a two-year moratorium on the location of new mining claims in the area. The two-year moratorium provided time for completion of the Cooke City Area Mineral Withdrawal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management prepared the EIS.

Notice of Availability of the EIS was published in the Federal Register on July 1, 1997. If the withdrawal had not been approved by the Secretary of Interior by August 31, 1997, Federal lands within the area would have automatically reopened to filing of new mining claims.

Public interest in the area has been high because of the natural resource values and the proximity to the area to Yellowstone National Park and the Absaroka-Beartooth and North Absaroka Wilderness Areas. The analysis team received nearly 400 comment letters during the mineral withdrawal process. During the Draft EIS comment period, the team received more than 200 letters.

Copies of the Summary and Final EIS and Record of Decision are available at Forest Service offices in Billings, Bozeman, Gardiner, Helena, Livingston, Missoula and Red Lodge, Montana.

Inventory Service Center Wraps Up 1997 Season

*by Laurie Lemieux, Supervisory Forest Technician,
Flathead National Forest, Kalispell, Montana*

The Inventory Service Center (ISC), Kalispell, MT, has completed its fifth season. The Center's primary responsibility is conducting the Forest Inventory analysis (FIA) project.

The 1997 season goal was to complete the Beaverhead National Forest (355 plots); Deerlodge NF (189 plots); Custer NF (194 plots); the remaining plots on the Helena NF (83 plots); and 50 of 283 plots on the Gallatin NF: a R-1 total of 871 plots.

The Service Center met and exceeded the 1997 goal by the end of August. In September ISC surpassed all expectations: 120% of the goal. Only 50 to 60 plots remain on the Gallatin NF.

The completion of more than 800 plots has now placed a strain on the data entry personnel who are placing the plot information in the computer data base. Each plot is entered twice to minimize human entry errors; computer plot entries are then returned to the field for editing. Edited plot information is then returned for data entry.

Field crews take 12 photographs on each plot. Photographs are placed in plot folders with corrected global positioning systems (GPS) points and sent with tree core samples to the Rocky Mountain Research Station, Ogden, Utah. The folders are filed in the Kalispell, MT, office.

The Inventory Service Center is also conducting special purpose projects. ISC personnel cruised 77,000 acres of private and Forest Service lands in the Big Sky Land Exchange. Crews completed half of the project in October.

Cruising projects require that a certified cruiser be present or one must be available to verify the gathered information. Certified cruisers bring experience and professional skills to the projects and verify the data. The Service Center has four certified cruisers.

Having completed their 1997 projects early, ISC crews were detailed to other projects. They collected data for a landscape analysis of the Good Creek drainage on the

Tally Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest. Information is being gathered to help in determining the range of management options available in the area. The analysis includes fuel, stream and sedimentation surveys. Crews are also measuring 400-foot fuel transects. The transects are a new method of inventory, focusing on the largest pieces which typically have the greatest influence on fire severity. The data will be used in quantifying potential fire severity adjacent to private lands.

Crews were also involved with regeneration surveys on the Flathead NF's Tally Lake Ranger District. Recently harvested areas were examined to determine stocking levels. Adequately stocked stands will be certified. Survey crews provided information about inadequately stocked stands to aid in making management decisions about future treatments.

Other projects include trail reconstruction, Douglas-fir beetle surveys in the Little Wolf fire area, stand exams on the Lolo, Flathead, and Gallatin National Forests, and pre-sale cruising on the Custer and Flathead National Forests. ISC crews will be in New Mexico this winter to assist with forest inventory projects.

The Service Center is now finalizing plans for the 1998 season. Crews will work in northern Idaho and finish up in the Gallatin NF. ISC will continue to provide personnel for other projects.

Crews are experienced in aerial photography interpretation, ecodata, GIS/GPS work, neotropical wildlife bird surveys, large and small mammal trapping, telemetry, projects requiring field diagnosis for future treatment, biological assessments, and sensitive species surveys. Anyone needing ISC personnel and services, should contact Keith Soderstrom, Flathead National Forest SO [406/758-5200]. For special projects requiring field crews next summer, contact Keith by mid-February.

Sustaining Environments & Communities Conference Draws 500 to Kalispell

Working in partnership with several organizations, the Northern Region's Division of State & Private Forestry organized a 4-day, national conference in Kalispell, MT, in August on "Sustaining Our Environment and Our Communities: Working Together. The Sky Is The Limit."

Nan Christianson, cochair of the planning committee, reports the conference attracted more than 500 people from rural communities across the nation and included representatives from Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico.

"Interest and energy remained high throughout the week," Christianson reported. "People shared experiences and explored ways to enhance effectiveness in resolving rural social, cultural, economic and natural resource issues in their communities."

The conference explored the dynamics of change and the challenge of achieving sustainability in rural communities linked to the sustainability of the surrounding environments.

Cooperators in planning and organizing the conference included: Bitter Root Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D), Northwestern (MT) RC&D, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Convention & Visitor Bureau, Flathead Policy Center, Montana Rural Development Partnership, Western Montana Economic Development Group, Best Western-Outlaw Inn, USDI-Glacier National Park, USDBureau of Land Management, USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service, and USDA-Forest Service/ Forest Products Laboratory (Madison, Wisconsin).

Conference themes—collaboration, diversity and sustainability—were part of keynote presentations, field trips and working group discussions. Principal topics ranged from sustainable rural developments and funding good projects, to building leadership and communication skills, financing and capital development, and managing money.

Feedback from the participants confirmed that the conference was a tremendous success.

Written comments from some of the participants included:

"I have attended numerous meetings all over the county since 1973, and without reservation, this was the best run conference of them all."

THE TEXAS FOREST SERVICE, Lufkin, Texas

"...thanks to you for the outstanding job you did in planning and hosting the conference on Sustaining Our Environment and Our Communities. The workshops were excellent in content and format...[as was the] keynote by Stephen Ambrose on the importance of teamwork, friendship, personal character and service to country in all of our community-building work. I found the panel of Diane Dillon Ridgeley, Don Snow and Dan Kemmis on sustainability and place-based decisions to be a cutting-edge perspective on these issues."

LAKE STATES FORESTRY ALLIANCE, Inc., Hayward, WI

"Thanks and congratulations on a 'bang up' conference! What a success it was. I gleaned so much information from it. Now to rethink it all and see how our community might put it to practice."

GREATER ST. JOE DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, Inc., St. Maries, ID

"The conference provided an opportunity for people to rediscover their connections and common ground," Christianson reported, "confirming that when people work together, concentrating on the places and values that unite us, rather than on the issues that divide us, then the sky is the limit."

Public Involvement Experience, Lessons

The RO Public & Governmental Relations Office (P&GR) recently published a collection of collaborative stewardship case studies, "Lessons Learned in Public Involvement."

More than 22 case studies, ranging from "Blackfoot Challenge, Lolo National Forest" to "Washington Water Power Recycling, Kootenai National Forest", are available in a 27-page booklet of Northern Region collaborative stewardship experiences (telephone Kimberly Landl, RO P&GR, 406/329-3095).

"Intent of the 'Lessons Learned' format is to provide concise examples of methods and techniques that can be used in planning and organizing various public involvement strategies," explained Beth Horn, RO Director of P&GR. "Our objective is to make examples of collaborative stewardship 'Public Involvement' available for utilization in project and Forest planning efforts."

"As we build and enhance community relationships and sound ecosystem management," Horn explained, "it is critical we be effective in our collaborative efforts."

The case studies were submitted by R-1 Forests and RO divisions. They are being shared with others to help in clarifying what collaborative and involvement approaches have worked and why, as well as those approaches that have not been successful and why.

Case study summaries include name of the project, Forest/District, size/type of community, community history, Forest Service/community relationships, involvement/collaboration objectives & methods, what worked, what didn't work, and contact person for the project.

The P&GR staff encourages everyone to submit their examples of "Lessons Learned" in Public Involvement for use in the next edition of the book. P&GR plans to update the book of case studies quarterly. Send your writeups on your "Lessons Learned" to Kimberly Landl.

Opportunity Resources Receives N.I.S.H. Award

*By Jane Haker, Administrative Officer,
Missoula Aerial Fire Depot*



In July, the staff of the Missoula Aerial Fire Depot and National Weather Service honored Opportunity Resources, Inc. (ORI), Missoula, with a reception at the AFD.

ORI has been selected to receive the National Institute of the Severely Handicapped's Performance Excellence Award for Government Contracting for 1996. ORI received the NISH award in recognition of their commitment to customer satisfaction, timeliness of performance, cost cutting initiatives, and process improvements at the Missoula Aerial Fire Depot and the National Weather Service.

Through their long history of providing quality janitorial services since 1989, the "Facilities Services Support Contract" was initiated to expand ORI's services at the Aerial Fire Depot to include manufacturing, refurbishing and mail services.

Joan McNab, Contracting Officer, Lolo National Forest, was also an award winner. Through Joan's hard work and dedication, she became a leader in the Forest Service by developing the innovative approach to meeting the fire mission and employing handicapped individuals in the Missoula community.

OPPORTUNITY RESOURCES INC., MISSOULA, HONORED by Forest Service and National Weather Service at a reception at the Missoula Aerial Fire Depot. ORI received the National Institute of the Severely Handicapped's Performance Excellence Award For Government Contracting. Left to right: members of the ORI staff, Pat Collins, Richard Ensign, and Jack Cambers with Joan McNab, contracting specialist, Lolo National Forest.

*Photo by Jane Haker, Administrative Officer,
Missoula Aerial Fire Depot.*

In recognition of her efforts she received the Government Services Award runner-up honor.

Providing 10 Years Service At Missoula's Federal Building

by Roz Craft, Opportunity Resources, Inc., Missoula, MT.

In August, Opportunity Resources celebrated ten years of providing janitorial services to the Missoula Federal Building, a national historic site. The Regional Office of the USDA Forest Service is housed in the building.

After some initial apprehension about this change in 1987, Forest Service personnel soon found themselves saying, "Why hadn't we done this earlier?"

This Federal Building contract currently provides employment for nine crew members, a production worker, a lead worker, and a supervisor. Joe Hassler, supervisor, gives the credit for

their success to the dedication of these individuals who obviously take great pride in their work. Being responsible for 144,000 square feet of space is, at times a challenge, but these crew members, who bring with them a combined 75 years of janitorial experience, are up to the challenge.

The Missoula Federal Building has become a model site as an innovative partnership between the Federal Government and community, nonprofit organizations like Opportunity Resources.

Other government contracts that Opportunity Resources currently has in-

clude a Facilities Support Contract. The innovative concept provides a variety of services under the umbrella contract. ORI's contract includes janitorial services to the Aerial Fire Depot (AFD) and National Weather Service, refurbishing services to the AFD Cache, manufacturing "drift indicators" for the Smokejumper Center, and mail processing services for the Missoula Technology & Development Center. ORI also contracts with the Department of Defense to manufacture survival kits for all branches of the military.

The Northern Region awarded \$412,000 in Rural Community Assistance grants to twenty-one communities, tribes and counties in Montana, Idaho and North Dakota earlier this year.

Bill Boettcher, R-1 director of Cooperative Forestry and Forest Health Protection, explained that "The grant funds are available through the Forest Service's Rural Community Assistance program. Communities use the cost-share funds to examine options for diversifying their local economies; to establish local community action teams; to develop plans to improve their economic, social and environmental well-being; and to implement projects identified in local plans."

Grant funds administered by the Forest

Service are provided under the 1990 Farm Bill (Title 23 Subtitle G of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act). Requests for grant funds far exceeded what was available. Eleven Northern Region National Forests requested \$1.3 million in assistance for 59 proposals.

"Success of the program," Boettcher said, "depends upon a strong desire on the part of communities to identify the community goals and priorities and to develop strong partnerships involving the Forest Service, State Departments of Commerce, other State and Federal agencies, the private sector and other communities."

\$412,000 In Rural Assistance Awarded 21 Communities, Tribes, Counties in MT, ID, ND

By Nan Christianson, RO Cooperative Forestry & Forest Health Protection, Missoula, MT.

Rural Community Assistance Projects Approved for Funding, 1997

Community/State	Description	National Forest	F.S. Grant
Elkhorn, MT		Bvhd-Drlg	\$10,327
Headwaters RC&D	Elkhorn Community Plan		
Ennis, MT	Economic Action Plan	Bvhd/Drlg	\$10,000
Northern Cheyenne Tribe	Northern Cheyenne Plan	Custer	\$8,000
Lame Deer, MT			
Lima, MT	Lima Fire Hall, Community Center	Bvhd/Drlg	\$40,000
Elk Park, Jefferson County; Butte, MT	Elk Park, Volunteer Fire Dept., Phases 1/2	Bvhd/Drlg	\$26,600
Madison County	Renovate Infrastructure	Bvhd/Drlg	\$15,170
Twin Bridges, MT.	Madison Co. Fairgrounds		
Deer Lodge, MT.	Rialto Infrastructure Renovation	Bvhd/Drlg	\$7,458
Virginia City, MT.	Enhancing Tourism in MT's Birthplace Town		\$26,000
Ravalli, MT	Florence Community Enhancement Project	Bitterroot	\$8,565
Community of Lenore	Renovation Lenore	Clearwater	\$22,900
Nez Perce City, ID	Community Center		
Pierce, ID	Community Park Phase 2	Clearwater	\$17,097
Wieppe, ID	Weippe Community Hall Foundation & Substructure	Clearwater	\$48,320
Custer County, Miles City, MT	Multipurpose Bldg.	Custer	\$35,000
Golden Valley County	Infrastructure Improvements		
Beach, North Dakota	Establish Local Economic Development Committee	Custer	\$5,000
Boundary County, Bonners Ferry, ID	Exhibit Hall Renovation	IPNF	\$34,344
Lincoln County, Eureka, MT	County Fairgrounds		
Mineral County, MT.	Historic Walking Tour	Kootenai	\$4,400
	County Historical Society Feasibility Study, Old Superior Elementary Bldg.	Lolo	\$9,750
Milltown, MT	Trailhead & Recreation/ Wildlife Viewing Area	Lolo	\$9,504
Sanders County, Trout Creek, MT.	Renovation	Lolo	\$17,638
Thompson Falls, MT.	Trout Creek Park		
Elk City, Idaho	Community Restrooms Drinking Facilities.	Nez Perce	\$16,000
Idaho County	Intermountain Woodnet	Nez Perce	\$39,500

15 NRCE Grants Total \$61,129

By Nan Christianson, Legislative Outreach
Coordinator,
RO State & Private Forestry,
Missoula, Montana.

State & Private Forestry received 29 proposal requests for a total of \$158,000 this spring in Natural Resource Conservation Education (NRCE) grants. Fifteen were approved for a total of \$61,129 in NRCE funds for full or partial funding of R-1 NRCE projects.

"Natural Resource Conservation Education funding helps people of all ages understand and appreciate our natural resources and learn how to conserve our resources for future generations," explained Bill Boettcher, RO Director of Cooperative Forestry & Forest Health Protection.

"Through structured educational experiences and activities, people develop the criti-

cal thinking skills they need to understand the complexities of ecological problems and the relationships of natural resources within ecosystems.

"NRCE equips people to form intelligent, informed resource opinions."

Forest Service units, State, local and tribal governments and not-for-profit organizations are eligible to receive NRCE funding through grants or cooperative agreements. NRCE is designed to foster lifelong learning processes that promote understanding and appreciation of natural resources, their relationships, use, management, value to society and conservation of the resources for future generations.

Natural Resource Conservation Education Funding Northern Region, 1997

Darby (MT) Ranger District, Bitterroot NF Bitterroot Valley Natural Resource Camps.	\$4,000
Flathead National Forest, Coram Experimental Forest Stream Monitoring Project.	7,048
Flathead National Forest, Forest Service Outdoor Education Snowshoe Program	4,700
Helena National Forest Mikal Kellner Foundation for Animals (Adopt-A-Species)	3,515
Idaho Panhandle National Forests Forest & Riparian Ecosystem Displays for North Idaho Wildlife Education Center	4,100
Cabinet Ranger District, Trout Creek, MT, Kootenai NF Bull River Outdoor Education Programs	5,000
Plains/Thompson Falls RD, Plains, MT, Lolo National Forest Bend Environmental School	2,596
Montana Natural History Center/ Lolo National Forest Nature Education & Stewardship Training.	4,000
North Dakota Forest Service (Custer National Forest). Developing Statewide Capacity for Conservation & Environmental Education.	8,000
Flathead Economic Policy Center (Flathead National Forest) Flathead Community Celebration, "Living In The Landscape."	3,500
Western Montana College, Dillon, MT. (Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF) Environmental Education Curriculum, "Pioneering Discoveries."	2,000
Valley Boys & Girls Club (Clearwater National Forest) Natural Resource Education Center scholarships.	2,000
Tri-State Implementation Council (Idaho Panhandle NFs) 1998 Pend Oreille Water Festival	2,000
Center for Resourceful Guiding Technology (Lolo NF) "Building Our Children's Future": educational outreach program.	4,800
Missoula Family Y-M-C-A (Lolo National Forest) Lewis & Clark Trail Camp & Nature Discovery Curriculum.	3,870

TOTAL

61,129

For additional information about the R-1 Natural Resource Conservation Education Program, contact Nan Christianson, RO State & Private Forestry, by phone (406) 329-3599 or DG n.Christianson:R01A.

Arizonans Win Overnight Visit on McCart Lookout

By Cass Cairns, Information Assistant,
Bitterroot National Forest, Hamilton, MT.

They lived in the city. Camping, to them, was something you do in a motor home. But their thinking changed this summer when Dick and Cindy Middleton, volunteers for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Scottsdale, Arizona, participated in a fundraising auction and successfully bid on an overnight stay at the historic McCart Lookout (5,115 feet) on the Sula Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest, 20 miles southeast of Darby, MT, near the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness in southwestern Montana.

The overnight visit to the lookout was donated for the charity foundation.

The Middletons were excited about a short getaway to the Northern Rockies. They thought the McCart Lookout must be part of a resort. That was what they had in mind when they made their successful bid.

Cindy made a telephone call to the Sula Ranger Station to make arrangements. When Susan Wetzsteon, a District employee, answered the call, Susan asked, "Who will take our gear to the lookout?" Susan explained, "It's a mile and a half hike to the lookout. You will have to hike to the lookout and you will have to pack your gear with you as you hike in and back." A bit distressed, Middleton told Wetzsteon she would have to call her back.

At first, the Middletons didn't think this would be a good idea. They'd never gone hiking before. If you've never hiked, a mile and a half hike to a lookout—packing your gear—seemed a long distance. After talking it over, they decided there must have been a reason for this to happen. They invited their friends, Dave and Flo Wagner, to join them.

The result was a trip the Middletons and Wagners will never forget. The hike was long. But the surrounding beauty and easy grade of the trail made it worth the effort.

Being able to stay in a lookout that had been restored down to the original utensils



SULA DISTRICT RANGER DAVID M. CAMPBELL with the McCart Lookout painting gift from Cindy and Dick Middleton of Scottsdale, Arizona. Photo by Cass Cairns, Information Assistant, Beaverhead NF, SO, Hamilton MT.

and furniture was an experience of a lifetime. It was such an experience that Cindy wanted to do something that would permanently capture the "awe" of it. She took one of the photographs she had taken of the lookout to an artist friend who painted a watercolor of the McCart Lookout.

The Middletons were so appreciative of the Sula Ranger District's assistance and hospitality, they donated the watercolor painting of the lookout to the District.

Asked if she "would ever do something like this again?", Cindy said, "I don't think I'd hike into another place—though I don't regret hiking to the lookout—but if we could drive to another rental cabin or lookout, I believe I would." It sounds like Montana will be seeing more of the Arizona Middletons.

"Bring Back Natives" Arctic Grayling Grant For Upper Ruby River

by Jack de Golia,
Public Affairs Officer,
Beaverhead-Deerlodge
National Forest,
Dillon, MT.

Efforts to save the Arctic grayling in the upper Missouri River got a boost recently with a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The grant will help pay for improving grayling habitat and reintroducing the fish in the upper reaches of the Ruby River in Montana's Madison County.

The \$33,000 NFWF grant of Federal funds matches money from State and private

sources. It will also help other habitat improvement projects throughout the historic range of the grayling, from Great Falls upstream to the Continental Divide.

The "Bring Back The Natives" program grant involves Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Bureau of Reclamation, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Trout Unlimited, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The effort to save the grayling is led by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. For this grant, the Bureau of Reclamation contributed \$28,000 and the Forest Service contributed \$5,000.

NFWF, a non-profit organization, established by an Act of Congress in 1984, is dedicated to the conservation of native fish, wildlife, and plants. For more information about how to participate in the "Bring Back the Natives" program, call the Foundation at (202) 857-0166 or send e-mail to bbn@nfwf.org.

For more information about this particular grant, contact Bruce Roberts, at the Forest Service office in Wisdom, (406) 689-3243.

Horse Sense Seminar At Wise River R.S.

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest employees who work with horses attended a one-day seminar, in June at the Wise River (MT) Ranger Station, on a variety of horse care, safety and handling topics. Participants heard about horse medicine and practiced horse handling, trailer loading and saddling.

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest video taped the sessions. If you would like to borrow the "Horse Sense" video, telephone Jack de Golia (406) 683-3984.



JOE PLYMA, a ferrier from Madison County, offers instruction on the care of horses' hooves. Joe's mother, Cathy Williams, is a range conservationist for the Madison RD. Photo by Jack de Golia

Health-Safety Team Aims At Accident Prevention

by Ann Baker, Regional Safety & Health Manager, RO Human Resources

A Regional Safety & Health Leadership Team (RS&HLT), organized in March, will share leadership and oversight for R-1's safety and health program with the Regional Leadership Team.

A self-directed group, the team includes the Regional Safety & Health Manager, Unit Safety & Health Managers, subject experts, a union representative and Dick Bacon, deputy regional forester for operations, representing the Regional Leadership Team.

In July, the team initiated a major effort of pro-active accident prevention safety reviews to identify and abate safety hazards.

At a training and information exercise sponsored by the Missoula and Ninemile RDs, Bruce Crockett, RO engineering architect, and Ken Kaufman, Idaho Panhandle National Forests safety and health manager, lead the team through a review process for facilities, equipment, storage of hazardous materials, hazard communication plans, material safety data sheets, training, personal protective equipment, use-storage, and job hazard analysis.

Out of the training/information exercise, the team has planned a major focus next quarter on identifying and understanding safety and health abatement planning.

The R-1 engineering facilities staff recently completed three facilities inspection reviews in cooperation with safety and health managers. Six more facilities reviews are planned later this year. Major emphasis of the reviews is support and training of facilities employees. Line officers and employees are encouraged to participate in the reviews as training exercises in identification and abatement of hazards that can result in accidents and injuries.

The Health and Safety Code Handbook (FSH 6709.11), now in draft, will be the key document in identification and abatement of safety and health hazards. Deputy Regional Forester Dick Bacon reports the team is committed to reducing the \$11 million in accident/injury costs in fiscal year 1996 in the Region.

In the same year, the Region faced pending claims of \$69.4 million in safety related tort claims.

The Government Accounting Office reports that for every \$1 invested in safety and health programs, the savings return is \$4.26.

The new R-1 Safety & Health Leadership team is soliciting the support of every employee in the effort to revitalize the safety culture on Ranger Districts, in SOs and RO by identification and abatement of unsafe situations and behaviors.



REGIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH LEADERSHIP TEAM in a training information exercise at the Ninemile Ranger Station, Lolo NF.

Photo by Ann Baker.

Air Quality Standards Will Affect Burning, Wilderness Management

New ambient air quality standards and proposed visibility standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will eventually affect many activities in the Northern Region, most notably wildland burning and wilderness management.

Jerry Williams, director of Fire, Aviation & Air, explained that the new rules and standards "are meant to better protect human health and public welfare (crops, visibility, buildings, etc.) while allowing State air regulatory agencies flexibility in how the rules are implemented." He said, "We have an opportunity to work with State and local air

regulatory agencies during the implementation schedule proposed by EPA.

"We must continue to meet public concerns related to smoke and other pollutants produced from our management actions and will continue to support air quality monitoring in order to improve air quality analysis in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and the information we provide to the public and the regulators."

R-1 has been conducting smoke monitoring in the Bitterroot Valley since 1994. Williams said "This is, an example of how air quality monitoring data can be used to communicate with the public and regulators."

EPA's final air quality standards for "fine" particulate matter and ozone (soot and smog) took effect September 16. EPA has retained current standards for "course" particulates. Proposed EPA regional haze regulations are expected to be final early in 1998.

For more detailed information about the new air quality standards, contact Ann Acheson, RO Fire, Aviation and Air, by telephone (406) 329-3483 or DG (a.Acheson:R01A).

Grazing Association, County Commissioners, Join With Forest Service In Northern Great Plains Management Plans Revisions

by Tom Domek, writer/editor,
Northern Great Plains Planning Team,
Custer, South Dakota

By this time in 1998, people near the Custer National Forest's Little Missouri National Grasslands in North Dakota will know a great deal more about their archeological and vegetative resources.

Through a cooperative alliance, the Forest Service, the McKenzie County Grazing Association and the McKenzie County Commission are funneling additional monies into the Northern Great Plains Management Plans Revisions inventories designated

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to locate and describe archeological sites and the condition and makeup of upland vegetation and woody draws.

Inventories are now being done on the McKenzie Ranger District, Watford City, North Dakota, in the northern half of the Little Missouri National Grassland.

Extra money is being generated from Conservation Practice Program (CP Program) funds. These funds come from the grazing fees collected from grazing permittees. Over recent decades, about 50% of these grazing fees went to the U.S. Treasury. The other 50% was pooled into the CP Program.

Twenty-five percent of the money that goes to the Treasury is returned to counties to support schools, roads and bridges. The 50% pooled into the CP Program is used for conservation practices on grazing allotments. These practices include fences and stock ponds.

Gary Petik, range supervisor on the McKenzie RD, recognized an additional need. Petik and other personnel on the Ranger District are currently updating allotment management plans (AMPs), site-specific management plans that direct appropriate use of the land and resources on grazing allotments. What is and isn't appropriate is largely determined by a good understanding of the resources, including archeological and vegetation in the uplands and in woody draws.

Petik and his colleagues need that information to complete the AMPs. They have suggested that 60%—not 50%—of grazing fees be funneled into the CP Program next year. They reason that the added funds could be used to conduct the inventory work. That in turn will help support the AMPs updating. It, of course, would reduce the number of dollars returned to the counties.

Petik's proposal met with approval at the Forest Service's Northern Region headquarters and, finally, the McKenzie County Commissioners.

"It's in everybody's interest to keep the grasslands in good health," Petik said. "This proposal gives permittees and the grazing association an opportunity to participate in the inventory and data-collection work. The information benefits everyone."

This information will also be useful in revising the long-range management plans.

For more information about the Northern Great Plains Management Plans Revisions, telephone the Nebraska National Forest headquarters, 125 North Main Street, Chadron, NE 69337 (308) 432-0300.

The Northern Great Plains Management Plans Revisions (NGPMR) management alternatives Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will be released for public review and comment in June of 1998. There are indications of high public interest in the management plan revisions for eight National Grasslands, a tree nursery and two National Forests in the Great Plains.

By the end of the official public scoping period at the end of July, the Northern Great Plains Planning Team had received more than 2,500 scoping comments throughout the analysis process. The planning team is especially pleased with the many ideas, suggestions and comments about possible management alternatives.

Six Employee Groups Form Partnership

*by Sunny Hemphill,
RO Equal Opportunity Specialist,
Human Resources.*

Since 1993, the Forest Service (FS) has fostered the formation of several employee resource groups to help improve managerial decisionmaking by drawing on input from the perspective of Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, disabled persons and women.

These resource groups were established with charters and guiding principles formally sanctioned by the Forest Service. They are the African-American Strategy Group (AASG), the American Indian Council (AIC), the Asian Pacific American Employees Association (APAEA), the Hispanic Employees Association (FSHEA), Pathfinders Association of People with Disabilities (Pathfinders), and the FS Womens' Network (only a mailing list on the electronic network.)

The Northern Region recognizes and supports five of these resource groups to provide input on decisions and concerns and help in achieving diversity goals. During the recent Partnership Council's process for realignment of work and budget, resource groups saw advantages to having one contact point to address the common issues that affect minority and disabled employees and for involving all the resource groups in the realignment process and future proposals.

On July 7, in response to this need, employee resource group leaders and representatives from the USDA Coalition of Minority Employees met to plan strategies to efficiently and productively address their common goals and issues. Since less than 10% of the Northern Region's workforce are minorities, attendees agreed that formation of a collaborative, inclusive effort through a partnership was both practical and desirable.

Forming the Employee Resource Partnership (ERP) created a stronger, more viable entity to express concerns and champion causes of under-represented groups, and work in conjunction with Regional leaders to find solutions to critical issues. The partnership facilitates working closely together on common issues while providing one contact for managerial purposes. The one voice keeps Civil Rights issues on the table, increases sensitivity to the needs of under-represented groups, and provides a diversity of perspectives. ERP also plays a vital role in promoting external customer relationships and outreach while monitoring equal opportunities for all.

ERP members meet bi-annually to identify issues and concerns they hold in common. The ERP's elected spokesperson, Cliff Paradise, Contracting Officer on the Flathead NF, presents information at the Regional Leadership Team meetings. A second ERP member, rotating through the member groups, accompanies the ERP spokesperson at the RLT meetings so that each group can participate, build trust, gain important developmental experience, and provide their specific group's perspective.

The ERP serves as an advisory and sensing tool and provides a diverse presence at upper management meetings. It has been proposed that the ERP spokesperson become a functioning member of the Regional Leadership Team, working in concert in seeking solutions during developmental stages of decision-making.

This unique approach to a collaborative relationship is a step forward in meeting the direction and objectives of the Towards a Multicultural Organization effort and the Region's response to the USDA Civil Rights Action Team Report.

At the luncheon with Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck in Missoula, July 29, ERP presented their role statement, issues, and recommendations. Cliff Paradise, as the ERP spokesperson, challenged the Chief to follow up on the successes and results of the Employee Resource Partnership.

Fire Crews Drill, Compete In Canyon Creek Area Of Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

by Jack de Golia, Public Affairs Officer, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

The scene in Canyon Creek, west of Melrose, MT, looked for all the world like there was a fire in the woods. Yellow, green, and white wildland fire trucks were parked at odd angles with their tool boxes open. Fire fighters in yellow shirts and hard hats scurried about their tasks. Hoses were stretched across bushes and grass. Pumps churned water, buildings turned white with foam and neat stacks of wood near the building were scattered into the forest.

You might have noticed a few differences from what you'd see at a real, raging wild-fire. It was cloudy, drizzly and rainy. Every place fire fighters worked there was someone with a clipboard and a stop watch, watching and taking notes.

This was no emergency scene. But it was a serious event. Fire fighters were in competition with each other.

They came from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation with four fire trucks, from Yellowstone National Park with one large fire truck, and from all across the vast Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest they came with 11 more fire trucks.

Spread along several miles of the Canyon Creek valley floor were a series of stations where crews were completing different fire-fighting tasks, in a competition. One station involved the use of computer and satellite technology in map reading. Other test stations required crews to perform more traditional fire fighting work, like putting a hose in a creek to "draft", that is, using a pump to suck water out of the creek. They'd then fill one truck, then another, then pump water uphill from the second truck to a "fire."

At another station, crews were told that a wall of fire was heading their way and they had five minutes to do their best to protect the historic Canyon Creek cabin and then leave. The work involved moving flammable material like firewood and stove fuel out and away from the cabin, securing the windows, and covering the cabin with a detergent-like foam designed to keep the wood wet longer.

Then there was a test station that required fire fighters to safely cross a creek to find a fire in dense brush. It was a challenge, negotiating unstable, slippery rocks with full packs.



YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK FIRE CREW foams down the historic Canyon Creek cabin, as they practice trying to defend fire-threatened buildings with only moments to spare before the "wall of fire" arrives. Photos by Jack de Golia, Public Affairs Officer, Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF.

Crews were rated on how fast they performed the tasks at the stations. They lost points if they forgot to provide for safety, didn't communicate with each other or if they forgot any essentials. At the cabin, Jim Freestone, a Forest Service fire specialist on the Wise River (MT) Ranger District, made notes about such items as whether the crews turned their trucks around first, for a quick get-away; if they inspected the inside of the cabin for flammable materials; or closed the windows and curtains to help keep heat out. Crews were paired up at the start of the two-day competition, so part of the work involved quickly integrating two fire crews that didn't normally work together.

"That's something we have to do all the time at fires," explained Frank Russell, Dillon, MT, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest fire management officer. "We get thrown together and have about 30 seconds to start working together smoothly." At the end of the two-day practice, the winning team was declared. The team members came from Forest Service fire crews in Wise River and Boulder. But all of the teams performed well, according to Russell. "This was great training," Russell said. "We wanted our crews to have a chance to sharpen their skills, make mistakes, see how other crews solve problems, and just practice fire fighting without the risk of fire right in your face."



Canyon Creek. Standing (left) is Mike LaFollette, kneeling (from right to left) are Steve Smith and Joe Sumners. Lee Hahnkamp is across the road.

THE WINNERS: members of the winning Wise River/ Boulder team put hoses away after one of the training exercises at

John Greer Receives Heritage Excellence Award From RMLH&W

John G. Greer, Resource Staff Officer, Lewis and Clark National Forest, has received the Northern Region Recreation, Minerals, Lands, Heritage, & Wilderness Director's 1997 Award for Excellence in Heritage Management.



JOHN GREER

The award recognizes the critical contribution of Forest line and staff officers to excellence in heritage resource stewardship. Regional Archeologist Mike Beckes presented the award to Greer at a recent Forest Leadership Team meeting in Great Falls.

Greer was nominated by Forest Archeologist Richard Newton for his work in support of the new Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center and for his support in the resolution of highly complex American Indian traditional cultural concerns in the Badger Two Medicine management area.

John Greer joins previous award winners Larry Cron, Kootenai NF, Van Elsbernd, Deerlodge NF, and Tom Wagner, Bitterroot NF, in the ranks of those who have gone the extra mile to learn about, to understand and to advocate the goals of sound stewardship and historic preservation of the irreplaceable cultural resources of the Northern Region.

Nora Rasure Deputy Supervisor Coronado NF.

By Dixie L. Dies, Public Affairs Officer, Bitterroot NF.



NORA RASURE. Photo by Dixie L. Dies.

Nora Rasure, West Fork District Ranger, Darby, MT, Bitterroot NF, has accepted the position of Deputy Forest Supervisor on the Coronado National Forest, Tucson, Arizona.

Nora was West Fork Ranger for about 6 1/2 years, transferring from the Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada. Nora transferred to Tucson with her husband, Brent Gardner, and their six-year-old son, Makenzie.

Dave Campbell, currently Sula District Ranger, will also be the acting Ranger at West Fork for the next few months.

by Allen Rowley, Public Affairs Specialist,
Flathead National Forest, Kalispell, MT.

Flathead National Forest Packers Gene Brash and Bill Workman hauled 26 tons of supplies by mule for rebuilding part of a trail into the Great Bear Wilderness.

That comes out to 298 mule loads carried 11 miles up the Big River Trail over a six-week period in June and July. These supplies were used to replace cribbing along the trail. Without the new cribbing, the trail could have fallen off the hill into the Middle Fork of the Flathead.

Packing supplies by mule has a long history in the Forest Service. Some speak of it as a lost art. But the art is not lost on the Flathead NF. It is the only way most of the supplies needed to manage the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex are delivered to field crews.

This type of packing support is possible only with skilled, experienced and knowledgeable packers like Gene and Bill. Gene Brash, the lead packer, has worked at mule packing for 35 years, including 8 years packing for Glacier National Park. Bill Workman has been packing for 25 years, the last 18 with the Forest Service.

They work on the Spotted Bear Ranger District most of the time. Occasionally they help other Flathead NF Districts with large packing jobs like the Big River Trail cribbing work on the Hungry Horse Ranger District. The 26 tons consisted mostly of treated six-by-six-inch timbers, from four to 12 feet long. Shorter timbers are carried, one timber on each side of a pack mule. Twelve-foot timbers are tougher. One beam is tied to two mules, in a tandem load.

In tandem packing, a U-shaped bracket hangs from the D-rings of the saddle. Long timbers are cradled in the brackets. Ropes snug the timber against the saddle and keep the timber in the bracket. In a tandem load the back mule's head is between the two timbers; it has a limited range of motion for its head, and limited sight distance. The mules must work together and slowly side step around corners. If one animal gets in a hurry it would push its partner off the trail. Being tied together, both mules could end up upside down, off the trail. Only certain mules are suited to this kind of work. Tandem packing takes mules and packers a notch above most packing work.

Mules, like people, come with all types of personalities: bossy, loners, people lovers. Knowing their differences in tempera-

ments and personalities and using that knowledge is key to the art of packing.

The mules Gene and Bill work with are accustomed to heavy work. They know to not make their work harder by acting up of getting spooked. Factoring in all the personalities of the mules, and handling the awkward-shaped, heavy loads calls for real expertise, patience and cooperation by packers and mules.

As for packing the supplies in to the Big River Trail job, the District could have requested a waiver to permit the use of mechanized equipment—a helicopter—in the wilderness. But Wilderness Ranger Kraig Lang said "This is the right way to do it." Packing is a living tradition, and an important skill for Wilderness Management. Choosing to pack the timbers over flying helps preserve backcountry skills for the next time, when flying may not be an option.

One principle in Wilderness Management is to use the minimum tool necessary to complete the job. By doing so, managers ensure that we follow the Wilderness Act direction that man remains a visitor to the Wilderness and not dominate it. This was a key component in deciding to pack.

Wilderness managers consider economics, disruption of the solitude, potential impacts on the Wilderness resource, maintaining special or primitive skills, and safety, as a minimum when deciding how to complete a wilderness project. On this project, after reviewing all of this and looking at various alternatives, packing turned out to be the minimum tool to use.

With the professionalism demonstrated on the Big River Trail, future decisions will come easier on large wilderness projects.

(Right): **GENE BRASH**, lead packer, Spotted Bear RD, Flathead NF, ties a load of long beams on a single mule. Photos by Karen Nichols, THE DAILY INTERLAKE, Kalispell, MT.

Old Fashion Hauling of Lumber, Supplies On Flathead NF



FLATHEAD NF MULES crossing Bear Creek. Two tandem loads of long timbers are at the head of the string so the packer can keep close eye on them.



BILL WORKMAN (front), **FLATHEAD NF PACKER**, AND **JOHN MACLEOD**, recreation tech, Glacier View/Hungry Horse Ranger Districts, tie off a tandem load on two mules.





NEZ PERCE/CLEARWATER RETIREES gathered for a three-day weekend campout at Johnson Bar on the Selway River.

Clearwater/Nez Perce Retirees On Banks of Selway for Weekend

What a weekend!

Seventy-three former employees of the Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests camped together July 31 and August 1-3 at Johnson Bar on the Selway River. The campout was hosted by the Nez Perce National Forest and the Moose Creek Ranger District.

Food was catered by Lochsa River Outfitters, Sherry Nygaard and her crew.

Much of the time was spent by folks getting re-acquainted and sharing news of friends and families. There was a formal program time with Fire Staff Officer Byron Bonney sharing information on the combination of the Clearwater and Nez Perce Forests' fire and fuel shops. This combo is in its second year and seems to be working very well.

District Ranger Jerry Bird updated us on the Selway/Moose Creek re-organization and how it

is working as well as thoughts on managing the Selway River on a basin concept, rather than several units doing their thing.

On Saturday morning, Nez Perce National Forest Supervisor Coy Jemmett and Clearwater National Forest Supervisor Jim Caswell gave the group a "big picture" perspective on regional re-organization brought about by the budget reduction and changing workload, followed by a question-and-answer period.

Ranger Bird took the group on a field trip to visit a timber sale in the Swiftwater area.

It was a good campout with fellowship of like-minded people being the theme for the weekend. It seemed that our traditional Forest Service roots were exposed for a few days. There was something for everyone bold enough to participate.

*By Dave Poncin, R-1 Retiree,
Grangeville, Idaho.*

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INTO THE PAST

Max Lauder, facilities engineer, Flathead National Forest, SO, Kalispell, MT, with assistance from Linda Smith and Dan Smiley of the Flathead NF SO cadastral staff, correctly identified the "Into The Past" picture in the

September issue of THE NORTHERN REGION NEWS: Echo Ranger Station, Flathead National Forest. The picture was taken in 1924 by K.D. Swan.

The 1912 picture below is of a Ranger Station on the Lewis & Clark National Forest.

Where was it?

What was the name of the Ranger Station?



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